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LOUISIANA AG PRODUCER GROUP RECEIVES USDA FUNDING FOR STUDY Results of Study Could Mean More Jobs for Louisiana and More Profits for Louisiana Farmers

BATON ROUGE, November 9, 2004 – Michael B. Taylor, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Louisiana, joined officials from Louisiana State University's Agricultural Center to present \$17,350 in USDA Rural Development grant funds to Agricultural Commodities Economic Development, Inc., a Concordia Parish-based agricultural producer group. The producer group will use this funding to conduct a feasibility study for locating a small-scale soybean extrusion processing facility in Louisiana.

In October, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced approval of this grant, along with 96 other Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grants in 34 states totaling over \$13.1. The value-added grants will help farmers and ranchers increase their economic opportunities through the development of new products and markets for agriculturally-based products.

"Through value-added grants, USDA Rural Development is investing federal dollars in America's farmers and ranchers," said Taylor. "By helping farmers and ranchers diversify their products, USDA Rural Development is helping to economically strengthen independent producers and rural communities."

Staff of the Louisiana Tech Center for Rural Development and LSU's Agricultural Center assisted Agricultural Commodities Economic Development, Inc., in developing their successful grant application. "We are pleased that their grant application was approved," said Dr. Kenneth J. Roberts, Associate Vice Chancellor of the LSU Agricultural Center and Associate Director of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. "This producer group is comprised of 12 independent agricultural producers who joined as a corporation to investigate alternatives to row crop farming—especially value-added products from soybeans."

Members of Agricultural Commodities Economic Development, Inc., farm in Concordia, Tensas, West Baton Rouge, Pointe Coupee, and Iberville Parishes in Louisiana and Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, Claiborne, and Amite Counties in Mississippi.

USDA Rural Development provides a full range of rural development credit services in rural Louisiana. The Louisiana Rural Development State Office is located at 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302, and the telephone number is (318) 473-7921. There are four area offices located throughout the state to serve Louisiana residents. Further information on USDA Rural Development's loan and grant programs can be obtained by visiting Rural Development's web site at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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